

NOVEMBER 24, 1977

The Shortgrass deer season is going into the second weekend of intense shelling and heavy movement of men and vehicles. State police have been able to keep traffic moving on the big highways; farm to market roads and country right-of-ways, however, have been snarl of motor buses and trailer houses.

Herders have leased everything except the vacant lots in the towns and cities. Deer stands make eerie shadows across the rangelands, reminiscent of the skyscrapers in the cities up north.

I do a brisk business at the ranch without leaving the front room. On weekends in particular, I sell hunting information for \$50 a gun or \$5 per linear inch on each open bladed knife carried on the person.

The surcharge on bowie knives developed after I grew tired of walking out to the pickups to count the rifles. I thought of making a charge based on small, medium, and large bandoliers of ammunition. Most hunters carry an average of 500 rounds to the field. I abandoned the idea when I took a nasty cut from a machete blade hanging guerrilla style from a pistol belt. Redcaps are dangerous to approach in full battle dress. I recommend taking their word for the length of the knife blades and avoiding the chance of derringer misfiring or Luger exploding between your hind legs.

Don't worry much about the quality of the information. Most inquiries are of a geographical nature, as most hunters are lost. Dwell on adding color to your directions more than accuracy. Spur them on with phrases like "if you miss the turn at Deadman's Corner just go on straight to Jet Alice's roadhouse." Hunters like that kind of talk. The strain of travel makes the redcaps lonesome. Treat them like you'd want your children to be treated away from home.

Hunting income is bringing lots of coin to the Shortgrass Country. Herders are sacking the last money before winter strikes. With some lobbying, the restrictions on the length of knife blades could be changed. I'd like to see some 14 inchers appear on the scene.